



GEORGE & ELLEN HENRIKSEN

George F., 1914-2001

No Finer Man, No Warmer Heart

Mary "Ellen," 1915-2002

Timeless Spirit, Boundless Love

"Let George do it" has been a phrase aptly applied to George Henriksen, for he has taken on community tasks no other would or could handle. He truly believed and lived by the Golden Rule—a trait passed down from his father, Jorgen, who came to America from Denmark in 1883. It was said that George was kind and giving to a fault, just like his father. It was his flamboyant personality, unrelenting passion for serving the community, his obvious love for his family and zest for politics that were his greatest passions. He stressed that it was our obligation to leave our community better than we found it, a true "key to success." "I love America and I do my little bit to hold it together," he said. Shaking hands with President Eisenhower was a memorable moment, but the greatest day of his life, and most humbling experience was the day he was touched by the Pope.

George's father organized the first telephone company for Washougal, and was involved in several other businesses. Again, like his father, George was interested in business and began a partnership with Ray Bachelder in Economy Drug Store for eight years in downtown Camas. In 1948, when Mickey Schwary built the One-Stop Shopping Center, he convinced George to join him. Save-On Drugs became a big success! He kept the business until he retired, turning the reigns over to his daughter, Nan. George was also the number one Papermaker fan, and headed up the campaign committees for school levies.

The phrase, "behind every great man is a great woman" was never more true than for George and Ellen. She was a student in a chemistry class that he taught, and from the moment he saw her, he was attracted to her. He recalls of their wedding day in 1937 that they were married at 10:00 in the morning—then he taught a class at 11:30, which certainly was the epitome of sacrifice and commitment to his profession.

Ellen gave her family an upbringing of amazing family traditions and high expectations. Her greatest delight was in giving all the support, encouragement and care needed to convince each member of her family that they were extraordinary. And extraordinary they were—how many can say their children include a doctor, George, "Bub," a pharmacist, JoAnne, "CoCo" Skimas, Nan, a mayor, and John, a lawyer and U.S. Navy legal advisor to the Admiral of the Seventh Fleet. It was a family overflowing with recognition, accolades and community activism. Ellen's great loves, her own "keys to fulfillment," were her family, gardening, nature and knowledge. She was most content to be "behind the scenes."

Their younger daughter, Nan, was an exchange student, businessperson, and was elected for three terms as mayor of Camas, the first woman to hold the job in the city's history. Her focus as mayor was to make the impossible possible, proper planning, and a vision for the future. She was elected president of the Association of Washington Cities in 1989. She represented all of southwest Washington on the Association's Board of Directors for five years. She received the Woman of Achievement Award for her many contributions to the local community. During her third term as Mayor, she was appointed by Governor Boothe Gardner to serve as a member of the Western Washington Growth Management Hearings Board. Nan currently serves on the Community Center Advisory Board.

Granddaughter Kris's love for her grandparents is displayed in a beautiful floral cross that she makes every Memorial Day at their gravesite.

